

**ISAIAH**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Isaiah chapter 63 as we continue our study through the Word of God. As we saw last time, Isaiah chapter 61 opened up with a picture of Christ's First and Second Coming all linked together. When Jesus came the first time He came as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. That is the good news. He came to heal those broken over their sin, to set free those who are bound by sin. It is called the "**year of the LORD**" or the age of Grace that God has poured out upon us!

Remember that this was the portion of Scripture that Jesus was reading in the synagogue in Nazareth, His hometown. And as Jesus finished speaking about the work that the Messiah was to do, that portion of Scripture spoke of the Messiah, He put the scroll down and said, "**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**" Luke 4:21. And now, for almost 2,000 years we have been living in that period of time known as the "**year of the LORD**" or the age of grace. But that is coming to an end!

You see, as Jesus was reading out of Isaiah He stopped right in the middle of a verse, He did not complete the thought. He left out, "**. . . and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn.**" Why would Jesus leave off that last part of verse 2, why didn't Jesus finish the thought? Because this "**day of vengeance**" is speaking of God's wrath being poured out and it is poured out against a Christ rejecting world! He came the first time as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world; He came the first time riding on a donkey. But He is coming again on a white horse and He is coming to take back that which was purchased with His blood, this earth! He is coming back to set up His Kingdom on this earth fulfilling the promise He made to the Jewish people.

But before He does set up His Kingdom He pours out His wrath on a Christ rejecting World like I have said! Again, that is difficult for some Christians to understand and they say that was God in the Old Testament, but not in the New Testament.

If you believe that then just listen to what Revelation chapter 6 has to say, which is in the New Testament. Beginning in verse 12 we are told, **“I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?’”** Revelation 6:12-17.

Judgment is coming before the Kingdom is set up. Jesus is going to rule and reign from Jerusalem but before that is established, before the King sits upon the throne, judgment is coming and that is what we will see as we get into Isaiah chapter 63 this evening.

With that as our background, let’s begin reading in Isaiah chapter 63 starting in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

**ISAIAH 63****VERSE 1**

1. First of all we need to keep in mind that this prophecy is related to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and it is describing “**the day of vengeance of our God.**” And notice that the people are asking who this is who is coming from Edom, from Bozrah with these dyed garments and we will see as we move on they are dyed with or covered in blood!

This is speaking of Jesus Christ and the reason I can be so sure is that this person answers the question that is asked by the people and says, “**I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save.**” There is no doubt about who this is speaking of. It has to be the Lord Jesus Christ because He alone speaks in righteousness and He alone can save! Man has been trying to save himself ever since sin entered this world in the Garden of Eden and he continues to try today. But it is only God who saves or as Peter said, “**Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.**” Acts 4:12.

2. Keep in mind that Edom was named after Esau, Jacob’s older brother and as you look at the Scriptures Edom is a type of the flesh. Bozrah was one of the capital cities in Edom. This area known as Edom is located southeast of the Dead Sea and the Edomites were one of the perennial enemies of Israel, even though they were family, and God said that He will judge them for coming against His people.

Now let's look at this spiritually speaking because I think we also see that being spoken of, the judgment of man. In the Tribulation Period we see God once again deal with the Jewish people and they will come to saving faith but the Lord is also pouring out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world. Since Edom is a type of the flesh, God is going to judge man!

3. What I want you to also notice is that He is coming from Bozrah, from Edom and I believe He is returning to Jerusalem. The Lord makes His way from Lebanon to the wilderness of Kadesh to Bozrah and then returning to set His feet on the Mount of Olives. It is the Valley of Megiddo moving southward to Edom and then back to Jerusalem!

And the distance from Lebanon southward is 200 miles! Revelation 14:20 says, "**And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.**"

4. We talked a little about why the Lord goes to Bozrah, why He goes to Edom but besides dealing with the people of this area for their sin, I think there is another reason. I think it is because the Jewish remnant fled to Petra from the Anti-Christ and Petra is located in the area of Edom.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 23:37-39 in regards to what the faithful remnant would do prior to His return. We read, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”** I believe that as they are gathered in Petra and protected by the Lord that they come to that saving faith in the Messiah, in Jesus and as they call upon the Lord Jesus to come, He will!

#### VERSES 2-6

1. Once again the people are asking the Lord a question. They want to know why His clothes, His glorious apparel are stained red like grapes that are trampled in the winepress. Think of the old Lucy show and when she was in Italy and was stomping grapes in that big barrel.

For those of you who don't know what I am talking about in regards to this Lucy show, let me explain to you what a winepress looked like back in Isaiah's day and in Jesus' day, a little different than a barrel. A winepress was made out of a hallowed out rock with a whole drilled into the bottom to drain out the grape juice. And as the grapes were placed into this vat, the people would stomp on them with their feet, squashing the grapes so the juice would come out, and some of that juice would splash upon their garments and stain them.

So the people want to know why His garments are stained and as we have seen it is the judgment of God that has come upon them. That means that this person must be the Lord. I do realize that there are those who refuse to see this as being the Lord but who else can judge the people righteously? It is the Lord alone!

2. Now notice the picture that is being painted for us here. Those who have rejected the Lord, those who have turned their backs on Christ are likened to grapes that have been placed in a winepress and crushed with their blood staining the Lord's garments. Again, many have a hard time with this picture but Revelation chapter 14 shows us that this is the Lord and it is the Lord who will crush the wicked!

In Revelation 14:14-20 we are told, **“Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, ‘Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.’ So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped. Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. And another angel came out from the altar, who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, ‘Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe.’ So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. And the winepress was trampled outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, up to the horses’ bridles, for one thousand six hundred furlongs.”** Revelation 14:14-20.

As we have seen, for almost 200 miles there is the remains of lives that have been crushed by God's wrath with their blood either flowing or being splashed some 4 to 5 feet up on the horses' bridle. Now some of you might be thinking that it is this angel that is doing this and not the Lord. Hang on because in Revelation 19:11-21 we are told who is judging the people of this world and it is not an angel but it is the Lord!

Listen to what we are told beginning in verse 11 of Revelation chapter 19, **“Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. *He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.* And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, ‘Come and gather together for the supper of the great God, that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, both small and great.’ And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”** Revelation 19:11-21.

So we can clearly see it is the Lord who treads this winepress of the wrath of God upon prideful man who rejects the living God!

3. Notice again that it is the “**day of vengeance**” and the “**year of My redeemed**” in verse 4. I like that. It is a day of wrath and a year of His grace or to put it more accurately, His wrath is but for a moment but His grace is everlasting but you can reject it if you want and sadly, many do.

4. I do realize that there is a growing number of Christians who say that God has forsaken Israel, He is done with them but as you read the Scriptures, this everlasting covenant that God made with them is just that, everlasting. It is based on God’s faithfulness and not theirs!

Paul reminds us in Romans 11:26-27, “**And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins.’**”

Yes God’s wrath will be poured out but He is also coming back for His people, the nation of Israel, and those who have turned to Him during the Tribulation Period. The times of the Gentiles will be over and Gentiles will look up to the Jewish people instead of persecuting them. The Lord will put an end to all this misery and pain and set up His Kingdom where righteousness will flow from.

5. Now here’s the thing. What are you putting your hope in? If it is anything but the Lord you are in trouble, you are prideful. Now you may not agree with me but think about it. You are saying that you know better than God and that is ***PRIDE!*** In Proverbs 8:13 we are told, “**The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.**” God hates prideful hearts, it is what brought Lucifer down and it will bring us down! We are told that very thing in Proverbs 16:18, “**Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.**”



And isn't it amazing what people place their hope in today! So many are putting their trust, their hope, their faith in this world. If you are you will find out you have nothing for your investment! Place your faith, trust, hope in the Lord and the building up of His Kingdom. Store up for yourself treasures in heaven that will last for eternity.

Take heed to the warnings of John when he said, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life - is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.”** I John 2:15-17.

6. One more point before we move on and it has to do with punishment, God's wrath. Some Christians think that God can pour out His wrath upon His children; I don't see that in the Scriptures. Spurgeon sums it up like this, “You will hear one say, that such-and-such a good man was punished for his transgressions; and I have known believers think that their afflictions were punishments sent from God on account of their sins. The thing is impossible; God has punished us, who are his people, once for all in Christ, and he never will punish us again. He cannot do it, seeing he is a just God. Afflictions are chastisements from a Father's hand, but they are not judicial punishments. Jesus has trodden the wine-press, and he has trodden it alone: so we cannot tread it.” I hope that clears that up for you!

VERSES 7-14

1. In the midst of this judgment of God we see Isaiah speak of the lovingkindness of the Lord! In the blackness of God's wrath we see the brightness of God's love. But don't mistake God's love. God deals with an unrepentant sinner with justice, they will get what they deserve and they will be found guilty before God. But, for the repentant sinner God extends His mercy and grace, not negating their sin but that the sin was already paid in full by Jesus for us and all we have to do is receive it by faith.

That is the key to God's lovingkindness towards us, that He has saved us! We do not deserve it, we are not worthy of this salvation, but because of His great love for us, He saved us! And that is true of the nation of Israel as well.

You see, Isaiah looks back over their history, which was not so pretty. And Isaiah is showing them that even during the darkest times God stepped in to save them. It was not some vain hope that they had but a reality that was played out in the lives of their people. They could look back and see what God has done in the past to give them encouragement in the present and so can we.

That is what Paul said in Romans 15:4, "**For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.**" God's Word as well as our own past experiences help give us patience in the things we are going through now and comfort knowing that God loves us!

2. Now what about these words that the Lord spoke about the children of Israel in verse 8, **“... ‘Surely they are My people, Children who will not lie.’”** They fell far short of that, didn’t they? You bet they did and yet what God is speaking of here is His instructions to them, that they should not lie, that they should walk in the truth, they should not be deceptive in the things they do and say. And like Israel, we do not always follow His instructions. John warns us in I John 1:5-7, **“This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”** We need to walk in the light as He is in the light!

3. This is how actively God is involved with His people. Everything they went through, they experienced, so too did the Lord. It is as Isaiah 53:4-6 says, **“Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”**

Even Paul picked up on this when he said in Hebrews, **“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.”** Hebrews 4:14-15.

Thus, may we go to the One who knows us better than anyone can ever know us, the Lord! May we lay our requests, our concerns at His feet because He cares for us and understands exactly what we are going through!

4. We have seen God’s great love for His people, the Jews and yet, when we get to verse 10 we are told, **“But they rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit . . .”** God warned them that if they forsook Him that He would chasten them. If they were obedient to Him He would bless them.

But they refused to listen and turned from God to idols and God allowed the enemy to overtake them. It is as Psalm 78:7-8 says, **“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; And may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God.”**

The lesson we find here is also for us to learn as well. God wants us to obey Him not because He is some dictator, but He knows what is best for our lives. If we refuse, He will chasten us, not because He hates us but because He loves us!

5. What happens many times as we are going through difficulties is we forget what God has done in our lives, how He has delivered us from previous situations and we wonder where God is right now! We wonder why God isn't helping us now! It is amazing that when sin has brought its evil consequences upon our lives we wonder why God allowed this to happen and why He isn't doing anything to get us out of it. The reality of it all is that God warned them and He warns us long before we travel down that path that leads to destruction, but many times, like Israel, we refuse to listen!

And yes, difficult times are not always a result of sin in our lives. God will use trials in our lives to help us to grow, to show us what is in our heart. Satan will use the same trial to tempt us to sin. And there is the struggle for us, it is a battle of the flesh and the spirit and whatever you feed will control your life! And remember, **“As a beast goes down into the valley, And the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest, So You lead Your people, To make Yourself a glorious name.”** Isaiah 63:14. In other words, the Lord will see you through, He will guide you through the Sea or the storms of life, just keep your eyes upon Him!

#### VERSES 15-19

1. Keep in mind that this is a prayer of the faithful remnant who is just crying out to God to intercede for them and sometimes, in times of pain, in times when we are hurting, our theology can get messed up! Yes, they recognized that God alone was aware of their condition and He was the only One who could do anything about it. He was their faithful Father and yet, He didn't seem to be helping them. And they came to some wrong conclusions because of that!

You see, what ends up happening when we are placed in situation like that is that we tend to blame God for what is happening to us. Look at verse 17 again, **“O LORD, why have You made us stray from Your ways, And hardened our heart from Your fear? . . .”** It is not my fault but God’s fault, He did this to me! It is the old blame game and people don’t want to be responsible for their own actions!

God did not just come along and judge them for their sin, God was gracious to them, He was merciful to them, He was longsuffering to them and sent them prophet after prophet to warn them of the coming judgment if they continued in their sin. But they refused to listen, they refused to repent and thus, God gave them what they wanted, He allowed them to see what it was like to walk away from Him. Then, when their enemies took them captive they blamed God for it. God did not harden their hearts in the sense they were blaming Him, He just made firm what was already in their hearts just like He did with Pharaoh!

And their conclusion to all of this is that they are just like the Gentile nations, those nations that God never ruled over, the ones who were not called by God. “How can you do this God, we are your people and you treat us as strangers!” The reality was, God did not walk away from them, they walked away from God and found themselves in captivity and they were blaming God for this. Their captivity was based on their rebellion against God!

2. As we move into Isaiah chapter 64 we continue to see the pleading for the presence of God in their life. May we have that kind of passion for God, or as the Psalmist said, **“You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”** Psalm 16:11.

**ISAIAH 64****VERSES 1-4**

1. Keep in mind that the prayers we have been seeing are related to captivity and thus, we can look at this through the eyes of the Tribulation Period as the world turns against the Jewish people and their Babylonian captivity for the near term fulfillment of this. And the petition here is for God to come down and shake up the earth, burst forth from Heaven and protect Your people!

And the picture that is painted for us is how God came down at Mount Sinai when He gave them His Commandments. We are told in Deuteronomy 4:11-13, “**Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.**” Just like back then, they want God to come before them and deliver them from the situation they are in!

2. And think about this for a minute. In verse 4 we are told that there is no God like the God we serve! Nothing and no one compares to Him. Paul quotes this verse in I Corinthians 2:9 which says, **“But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’”** And the thought is that we can’t even imagine all that God has for us, and yet, in verse 10 of I Corinthians chapter 2 we read, **“But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.”** God’s Spirit has shown us many things; yes even the deep things of God as He opens the Scriptures up to our hearts and minds!

3. Do we have that kind of passion for the Lord? Do we desire to see Him come down and reveal Himself to us? We should! Back in 1735 we see the work of God in New England as Jonathan Edwards preached the Word of God. Listen to what he had to say about this time. He wrote,

The town seemed to be full of the presence of God. It never was so full of love, nor of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God’s presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. . . . The assembly in general was, from time to time, in tears while the Word was preached, some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors.

- Jonathan Edwards, Jonathan Edwards on Revival, p. 14



Now some of you may be wondering what God is doing today? He is working; His presence is being seen in the lives of people in India, the Middle East, Muslim nations and-so-on. Then why don't we see Him working here in America? Are we looking? Are we seeking Him? I think we tend to be more concerned about our own lives than seeking the Lord, spending time with Him and concern over our own sin and the lost condition of those around us. **“Oh, that You would rend the heavens! That You would come down! That the mountains might shake at Your presence.”** Isaiah 64:1.

Listen to this report about what is going on in Iran, not a Christian friendly nation and yet, God is making His presence known there. We are told,

Despite the Iranian government's ongoing crackdown of Christians living in the primarily Islamic country, the number of Muslims converting to become Christians is growing at an explosive rate, according to the persecution watchdog group Open Doors USA.

There is even talk of witnessing a Christian revival, especially among young people living in the country, say Open Doors ministry workers in the Middle East.

A house church movement within Iran is part of that revival and has triggered “many secret meetings.” The growth in the number of Christians is happening in all regions, but mostly in larger cities, say Open Doors workers in the region.

Iran is ranked 5th on the Open Doors 2012 World Watch List of the top 50 worst persecutors of Christians.

“Open Doors workers think that the growth of Christianity has everything to do with Iranians getting to know the real face of Islam, the official religion of Iran, and the mistrust of the people toward the government and leaders following the fraudulent 2009 presidential election of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad,” said a Middle East worker for Open Doors (name withheld for security reasons).

Since the beginning of this year, authorities have arrested Christian converts in Tehran, Ahwaz, Shiraz, Isfahan and Kermanshah, according to news reports from the Middle East and U.S.

In one city alone, Isfahan, more than a dozen Christians were arrested in less than a month, beginning in late February.

As The Christian Post has previously reported, although the established church in countries such as Iran suffers great violence, it is the underground, invisible church that continues to grow. Christians are putting their lives at risk for their continued faith.

According to Open Doors USA President and CEO Carl Moeller, a stream of Christianity has arisen in the Middle East’s invisible church, sometimes referred to as the Muslim Background Believer Church.

“Men and women, out of emptiness of their current situation spiritually, are turning to faith in Jesus Christ despite the literally lethal risks in doing so,” Moeller said. “That’s only attributable to the work of the Holy Spirit.”

Also, at work is a common personality trait of the Iranian people, says another Open Doors worker from the Middle East region.

“Iranians are very outgoing and want to speak about their faith,” the ministry worker said. “That is why discipleship training (with elements of outreach and communications) for Iranian believers is successful. If you tell them that a Christian should share, the Iranian Christian shares.”

An estimated 200 Muslim Background Believers (MBBs) were living in Iran 40 years ago, according to Open Doors. Now, the number of MBBs is estimated to be 370,000. Iran also has the presence of the traditional Armenian and Assyrian church with about 80,000 members, Open Doors reports. These churches are presently free to have meetings in the language of its members, but they are not allowed to reach out to the Farsi-speaking Muslims. According to the Iranian government, there are about 200,000 Christians living in Iran, Open Doors stated.

- <http://www.christianpost.com/news/open-doors-growth-of-christianity-in-iran-explosive-71946/>

### VERSES 5-7

1. Who can approach God? Who can come before His presence? And there lies the problem for man. Sin had separated man from God! That was the problem and Isaiah recognized their sinful condition. He understood how they had turned from God and not just turned from God but continued down the path of destruction. The only solution to that problem was that they needed to be saved before it was too late.

But we can't be that bad can we? When compared to a holy and righteous God, we don't even compare. Isaiah gives us insight into how bad we are when he says here in verse 6 of Isaiah 64, **“But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.”**

Please understand that when the translators were putting together the King James translation of the Scriptures they toned down what Isaiah said. Even Spurgeon felt it should not be discussed and yet, God has placed it here and the reason being is that He wants us to know that our righteousness, when compared to His, is garbage!

Motyer put it like this, “*Filthy rags* is ‘a garment of menstruation’; bodily discharges were considered a defilement because they were the ‘outflow’ of a sinful, fallen human nature. So, even what we might consider to be in our favour, *righteous acts*, partake of the defilement of fallenness.”

So you think you are a good person, you think your righteousness can stand the test, sorry, God says “**No!**” and in a very big way, you are defiled! In fact, Spurgeon put it like this and it may not be something you thought about but we do need to think about this! He wrote, “Brethren, if our righteousnesses are so bad, what must our *unrighteousnesses* be?” Think about that one for a minute! That is the point that Isaiah is making, that our own righteous works, our own righteousness is disgusting before a holy and righteous God!

Now how can a person serve God who is unclean? Think about that? Spurgeon put it like this, “Under the Jewish law you know that when a person was unclean he could not go up to the house of the Lord. He could offer no sacrifice. God could accept nothing at his hands; he was an outcast and an alien so long as he remained unclean.”

There is only one way that man can be reconciled back to God and that is through Jesus Christ. But how can I be righteous before God if my righteousness is like filthy rags? Simple, Paul put it like this, **“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”** II Corinthians 5:21. The reason is that it is not our righteousness, which are like filthy rags, but the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed into our lives by faith!

2. The problem was that they were not calling upon God, they were not seeking God, there was no desire for God. They did not see a need to repent of their sins as a nation and it is like Proverbs 14:12 says, **“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”** Apart from Christ there is only death!

#### VERSES 8-9

1. This is so important for us to understand, that He is the potter and we are the clay. We need to understand that apart from God we can do nothing. Isaiah recognized how far from God they were and called upon God not to forget them, don't hold their sin against them forever for they are His people. And God did not choose them because they were a good people, or worthy, He did it because He wanted to do it.

And like a master potter working with clay, Isaiah is asking God to continue to mold and shape His people into vessels of honor to be used by the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We, as God's children, desire the same. That God would mold us and shape us into the men and women He wants us to be. And the great thing about it is that no matter how lumpy, bumpy, rough, tough, we are, God will accomplish His work in us, He won't forget about us or leave us unfinished. He will complete the work that He has begun in us!

One writer put it like this as he spoke about this verse. He wrote,

The Bible says that God is the Potter and we are the clay. When we are open to God's will in our lives, He molds, transforms, and sanctifies us as we walk with Him.

When we come to the Potter, we need to surrender all to Him, all our imperfections and let Him be our Master. We need to let Him mold us and make us the vessel of honor that He wants us to be.

For this to be accomplished, we need to have the knowledge of God's Word before He can start the process of molding us. As the potter places a piece of clay on a wheel he needs water in order to make it pliable and soft enough for him to be able to use it. Jesus is our Living Water and the Bible tells us "**... that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.**" – Ephesians 5:26-27

Consequently, the very first step we have to take, if we really want God to mold and shape us into the kind of person He wants us to become, is to spend time in the Word so that we will become pliable and shapeable.

The next step is that the piece of clay needs to be properly centered on the wheel. The reason for this is if a lump of clay is not properly centered on the wheel, it will eventually tear apart before the potter can finish the process. In the same way we have to be properly centered in Jesus Christ before God can start to mold and shape us.

Being centered in Jesus is to have our life fully surrendered to Him where He is in full control. Jesus has to become both Lord and Savior in our life.

Just like the potter cannot mold the piece of clay into the piece of pottery that he is trying to make unless it is perfectly centered on the wheel, in the same way the Lord cannot begin to properly work with us unless we are perfectly centered in Him in full surrender.

If we try to live our lives without Jesus leading and guiding the way, our lives will eventually fall apart and we will never reach and fulfill the divine destiny to which God has called us. This is why Jesus tells us in His Word that without Him we can do absolutely nothing: **“I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing”** – John 15:5. God also tells us that if we try to build our own houses without His direct guidance, that we will end up laboring **“in vain”** if we try to do it all through our own efforts. **“Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.”** - Psalm 127:1

Once the lump of clay has enough water and is centered on the wheel, then the actual molding process begins. The wheel starts spinning and the potter’s hand presses down on the top of the clay to create an opening and moves his hands deep inside the middle of the clay. He continues by constantly shaping it and molding it to result in the vessel he desires it to be.

In the same way, God's own hand literally goes down deep into our soul and spirit where the sanctification work is actually done, molding and transforming us into the saints He wants us to be.

Just as the piece of clay needs to fully trust the potter, in the same way we need to fully trust the Lord to mold, shape, and transform our lives. The clay is totally under His control. It has to be one hundred percent yielded to Him. The clay must yield to the potter's hand if it is to become something useful. For this reason, we need to yield to God by surrendering ourselves completely.

When we are in the Potter's hands, feeling His pressures, feeling the molding of His fingers, we can relax and trust Him, for we know that this Potter has suffered with us and knows how we feel, but is determined to make us into a vessel useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work: **"In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work."** - 2 Timothy 2:20-21

If we allow God to use His skill and His power to mold us into the people, and into the character that He wants us to be, we should all say along with Isaiah, **"O LORD, You are our Father, We are the clay, and You our potter; and all of us are the work of Your hand."**

- <http://missionventureministries.wordpress.com/2011/11/28/god-is-the-potter-and-we-are-the-clay-isaiah-648/>

May we learn the lesson and surrender our lives totally to the Master Potter!



VERSES 10-11

1. Isaiah is speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians as if it already happened, but it is still some 125 years or so down the road. And just as Isaiah said the city was destroyed, the walls torn down, and the Temple burned with fire to the ground with thousands of Jews losing their lives.

In II Kings chapter 25 we get a report of what did take place. Beginning in verse 9 we are told, **“He burned the house of the LORD and the king’s house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. And all the army of the Chaldeans who were with the captain of the guard broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.”**

II Kings 25:9-10. Just as God said, it came to pass!

VERSE 12

1. Isaiah closes here with these questions to God; will He bring His judgment upon them, will He deal severely with them? God will answer them in chapter 65 and we shall see next week as we conclude the book of Isaiah.

I will leave you with these words from Psalm 91:1-2, **“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, ‘He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.’”**